National Governors Association
444 North Capitol Street, Suite 267
Washington, D.C. 20001

United States Conference of Mayors
1620 I St NW
Washington, DC 20006

April 29, 2020

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we ask that you please leverage the federal funds in the CARES Act, as well as already existing federal, state, and local funds to incorporate high quality out- of-school time (OST) and summer learning. Access to OST and summer learning enrichment must play a critical role in the COVID-19 response to help our nation's students rebound and succeed when school resumes.

Under normal circumstances, the school summer break is not an idyllic vacation for many low-income children and youth. It creates many challenges for students who often lack access to basic needs such as healthy meals, a safe, supervised place to be while their parents work, and meaningful, engaging learning experiences. A RAND Corporation report of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) offers conclusive evidence that summer is an opportunity to close achievement and opportunity gaps – to help kids catch up, keep up and grow in meaningful ways. Now, as families live in isolation and suffer the economic fallout of this global health pandemic, this summer promises to be an extraordinarily difficult time.

NWEA's most recent student learning report, ***The COVID-19 slide: What summer learning loss can tell us about the potential impact of school closures***, confirms that "achievement typically slows or declines over the summer months with generally steeper declines for math than for reading, and the extent (proportionally) of loss increases in the upper grades." Their report projects that with the COVID crisis, students may return in Fall 2020 with roughly 70% of the learning gains in reading relative to a typical school year, less than 50% of the learning gains in math, and in some grades, nearly a full year behind what we would observe in normal conditions.

Although summer and OST experiences may look different this season, we encourage local leaders to invest in engaging virtual learning models, and support quality professional development for educators while exploring creative community partnerships that ensure millions of students continue to learn, stay healthy and thrive this summer and when school resumes in the fall.

In order to mitigate this widening gap, it is critical that the federal funds provided by Congress be used to support high-quality out-of-school time learning opportunities now and this fall, as well as support targeted interventions for the country's most vulnerable students. Our organizations are encouraged by the passage of the bipartisan CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security) Act. Specifically, the CARES Act includes a $30.75 billion Education Stabilization Fund that would run through the Department of Education to states, with $3.01 billion for a Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund, and $13.5 billion for K-12 flowing directly to states and districts. In order to give states and locals enough flexibility to address the unique needs of their districts, the law includes a wide-range of allowable uses for these funds, including out-of-school time and summer learning opportunities.

Given the immense flexibility at the state and local levels, our organizations urge state and local elected officials to consider using these funds to support summer learning and out-of-school time programming in new and innovative ways to bolster learning and critical support families need during these uncertain times. We hope that we can lean upon your organizations to communicate the urgency of this matter to your members.

We offer the following recommendations:

- Meet with OST stakeholders to share solutions and strategies around this issue;
- Encourage State Education Agencies to provide robust guidance on continuity of learning in virtual environments combined with family engagement strategies and human services supports;
- Target interventions to address both projected major academic losses as well as social emotional supports;
- Coordinate with school, community, and municipal partners to ensure children continue to have access to free, nutritious meals during the summer months,
- Urge the corporate community to partner and reimagine summer youth employment, internships, mentorships and overall job readiness opportunities within the new COVID reality; and
- Partner with higher education institutions to develop strategies to mitigate the college "summer melt", where accepted and enrolled college bound students do not show up for classes in the fall.

There are dozens of organizations, both at the national level and with partners in all 50 states, ready and willing to help ensure our children do not fall even further behind. Leveraging federal funds for OST and summer learning is the first step in closing deep

equity and learning gaps that have been compounded by this crisis. We appreciate the opportunity to work with your organizations. The education and well-being of our nation's 55 million students is critical to this recovery effort and to America's future.

Sincerely,

After School Brilliance
After-School All-Stars
Afterschool Alliance
American Psychological Association
ASCD
Beaches Habitat for Humanity Education Program
BellXcel
Boys & Girls Clubs in Indiana Inc.
Boys & Girls Clubs of America
Brevard Public Schools
Center for Assessment, Strategic Planning, Evaluation and Research
City of Charlotte - Out of School Time Program
City of West Palm Beach Coleman Park
Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)
Columbia 21st CCLC @ Happy House, Inc.
Committee for Children
Communities In Schools National Office
Connecticut After School Network
Creative School Age Child Care
Democrats for Education Reform
Education Reform Now
Esperanza Elementary
EveryLibrary Institute NFP
Explorer Club Summer Camp and All Year Recreation Program
F.I.U After School All Stars

Fab Youth Philly
Field of Dreams Academy
Flagler 21st CCLC
Florida Afterschool Alliance
Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network
Girls Inc of Bay County
Girls Inc of Pinellas
Girls Inc of the Albemarle
Girls Inc Ulster and Dutchess Counties
Girls Inc.
Girls Inc. of Alameda County
Girls Inc. of Chattanooga
Girls Inc. of Greater Lowell
Girls Inc. of Greater Santa Barbara
Girls Inc. of Hamblen County
Girls Inc. of Johnson City & Washington County
Girls Inc. of Long Island
Girls Inc. of Lynn
Girls Inc. of Memphis
Girls Inc. of Metro Denver
Girls Inc. of San Antonio
Girls Inc. of Santa Fe
Girls Inc. of Sarasota County
Girls Inc. of Shelbyville & Shelby County
Girls Inc. of the Island City
Girls Inc. of the Pacific Northwest
Girls Inc. of TN Valley
Girls Inc. of Westchester County

Girls Inc. of Worcester
Girls Incorporated of Sarasota County
Girls Incorporated of Sioux City
Girls Incorporated of St. Louis
Girls Incorporated of Washington County MD
Girls Incorporated of Winter Haven
Grace Place for Children and Families
Greater Rochester Summer Learning Association
Idaho Out-of-School Network
Illinois AfterSchool Network
Indiana Afterschool Network
Indiana Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs
Kentucky Out of School Alliance
Marion County Commission On Youth, Inc.
Maryland Out of School Time Network
MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership
Michigan AfterSchool Association
Minnesota School-Age Care Alliance (MnSACA)
Missouri AfterSchool Network
National Afterschool Association
National Association for Year Round Ed
National Recreation and Park Association
National Summer Learning Association (NSLA)
New Leaders
New York State Network for Youth Success
North Dakota Afterschool Network
Ohio Afterschool Network
OregonASK
Playschool Child Care, Inc.
Portland Tennis & Education
School Specialty
School’s Out Washington
SDPBC 21st CCLC

SheEO Academy
St. Thomas University- 21st Century
The Sperling Center for Research and Innovation
University of Washington
Vermont Afterschool Inc.
Voices for Georgia's Children
We Are Family Educational Consulting Firm
Youth Club of Trinidad, Inc.
YWCA Nashville and Middle Tennessee
YWCA Ulster County